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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Yugoslavia

DATE: 25X1X

SUBJECT Patriarch Gavrilov's Return
to Belgrade

INFO. [REDACTED]

DIST. 7 March 1947

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SUPPLEMENT

ORIGIN [REDACTED]

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1. Patriarch Gavrilov's return to Belgrade was prompted by his fear of the possibility that the Holy Synod would elect a new Patriarch favorable to the Tito Regime. Upon his arrival in Belgrade, without fanfare, he immediately went to his residence where Metropolitan Josip invested him with powers. Among the first to call on the Patriarch was Vlada Zeceovich, former Orthodox priest and now Minister in the Federated Government of Serbia, with a delegation of Orthodox priests who joined the Tito Regime. During the call Metropolitan Josip briefed them on the present status of the Orthodox Church.
2. Among others who called on the Patriarch was a delegation from the Macedonian Orthodox Church requesting autonomy for their Church. In refusing the delegation's request, Gavrilov stated that so far as he is concerned there is no such thing as a Macedonian people; therefore, there can be no autonomous Macedonian Church.

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Comment: In this connection, it should be noted that Metropolitan Josip was at one time Metropolitan of Skoplje (Macedonia) and was expelled by the Bulgarians during their occupation of Macedonia in 1941. He was not permitted by the Tito Regime to return to his former post.

3. Another delegation which called on the Patriarch comprised a group of pro-Tito Orthodox priests from Montenegro who were accused by Gavrilov, himself a Montenegrin, of abandoning the Church for politics. Gavrilov also received Milovan Djilas, Minister in the Central Government, another Montenegrin.
4. It is reported that Gavrilov paid a call on Tito only after the insistence of a Soviet Bishop. He was accompanied by Metropolitan Josip and Bishop Dr. Nektarije Krulj, both strong nationalists. Tito received the Patriarch coolly. They discussed drawing up of a law for the Church, but without reaching any final decision.
3. In connection with the recent Pan-Slav Congress which took place on 8 December 1946 in Belgrade, the Patriarch was invited to speak, but his speech is reported to have been written by the Soviet Military Attache in Belgrade, General Gudurov. Although Gavrilov

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was told that he would be the first speaker, he was among the last to be given the floor- a situation which he sorely resented.

6. The first order of business that the Patriarch will face when he calls a meeting of the Holy Synod, of which he is President, will be to elect new bishops for the eleven vacant dioceses of the twenty-seven in Yugoslavia. There are at present two bishops known to be in favor of the Tito Regime: Rajich, former professor of catechism, a great opportunist, and Vukentije, who is very keen on being elected Patriarch.

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~~Comment:~~ The Patriarchate in Yugoslavia is divided into twenty-seven dioceses, with the Patriarch, six archbishops and twenty bishops at their head.